

Cantor's diagonal and describable sets

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Could someone help me understand the flaw in the following logic?

A) Suppose you construct a set of all describable sets over the integers and these consist of sentences of some finite length in some language and call them $\{E\}$. This collection is countable.

B) Now define a function f that takes the description of each E into a number n – say by taking the binary representation of the description. And you have $f(E_n) = n$.

C) Define the Cantor diagonal complement $E_c = \{n \text{ is an integer: } n = f(E_n) \text{ is not an element of } E_n\}$

D) E_c then should appear somewhere in the enumeration using f . And $f(E_c) = c$.

E) E_c then generates a contradiction. If c is an element of E_c , then by the definition in C) it's not an element of E_c . Likewise if c is not an element of E_c , then by the definition in C) it is an element of E_c .

F) So that appears to say that E_c can't possibly be in the enumeration E_n . But E_n lists all finite sentences about sets of integers and E_c is a finite sentence about integers.

G) So the conclusion is that E_c can't possibly be a set.

H) And if you look at the finite sentences that remain in E_n and construct the Cantor Diagonal Complement – that's some sort of collection of integers. But it can't be a set because of G.

I) So that says that there are some possible 'subsets' of integers that aren't really sets.

In responding to this and showing the flaw in the logic, can one avoid circular logic, like 'all subsets of integers are sets so the conclusion in I) must have a flaw'. I would like to know where the flaw actually exists. Thanks in advance for any insight you can provide.

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